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C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 001136

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/22/2013

TAGS: PREL CA OSCE

SUBJECT: CANADA RULES OUT BID FOR OSCE CHAIR

REF: A. STATE 101332 B. USOSCE 184

Classified By: Pol MC Brian Flora for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

(C) Poloff conferred with Lisa Helfand, Deputy Director of the NATO/NORAD section in DFAIT's International Security Bureau, on April 22 concerning Canada's interest in the OSCE chairmanship. Helfand indicated that Canada has decided not to be a candidate for the OSCE chair in 2006, for a couple of reasons. First, a decision to seek the chairmanship would need to be made by the Prime Minister, and Canada will have a new prime minister in less than a year's time. Second, while acknowledging that holding the OSCE chair makes sense for Canada politically and in terms of its foreign policy interests, Helfand indicated the costs and logistics involved in serving as chair from this side of the Atlantic are prohibitive for Canada. (Comment: The financial burden cited by Helfand would also seem to argue against future OSCE chairmanships for Canada.)

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